

ELLE FASHION

PURCHASE POWER

How store design affects how you shop.

Think you're just browsing? Think again. According to Dinesh Doshi, author of *The Art & Science of Store Design*, the modern retail environment is a labyrinth designed to seduce – nothing is merchandised without a strategy.

Doshi says that shopping can be divided into two categories: Impulse and planned. Stores are savvily mapped to suit both types. Cosmetics, which are considered impulse items, are always on the main floor, "They're an obstacle," explains Doshi. "You have to go through them before getting to your planned shopping." Other impulse buys, such as women's shoes, are usually placed next to cosmetics. (Planned items, like winter coats, are generally on a higher, harder-to-reach floor.) Men, who are typically reluctant shoppers, are also often the biggest impulse buyers. "Stores place pricey impulse items, like leather bags, in the entranceway of men's departments," says Doshi. Malls and department stores are also veined with coiling passageways that keep shoppers moving in the desired direction (that is, away from the exits). "The passages are curved and twisty, offering a sense of discovery," says Doshi. "It subconsciously draws people back in." Although we may feel that we're wending our way, directionless, through a mall, Doshi says that North Americans are governed by a cultural reflex to walk to the right. (In the United Kingdom, people gravitate toward the left.) That means that the most expensive items are placed on the right. The moral? Always look on both sides before looking for your wallet. o.s.



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